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UNCLAS TAIPEI 003533

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EAP/PD, EAP/TC AND INL/AAE

PLEASE PASS - AIT/WASHINGTON

CONGEN HONG KONG FOR DEA AND DHS

FROM AIT KAOHSIUNG BRANCH OFFICE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SNAR ASEC EWWT ETRD PREL TW KS ESTH

SUBJECT: Fake Viagra from China Seized in Southern Taiwan

¶1. SUMMARY. Officials of the Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau (MJIB), Kaohsiung County station, recently raided a trading company and its affiliated retail shop in Kaohsiung County, Taiwan, and confiscated a large quantity of ecstasy and counterfeit Viagra. The company's owner was arrested. The MJIB inspectors determined that the suspect, KO Bao-ji, has been trafficking a variety of illicit substances, including ecstasy and Viagra, from China into Taiwan for over three years. The seizure is estimated to have a market value of USD 310,000. END SUMMARY.

¶2. On 21 August 2005, inspectors from MJIB's Kaohsiung County office raided the Jing Yiao International Trading Company and a shop located at Chiaotou Town, Koahsiung County, Taiwan, and seized large quantity of illicit ecstasy and Viagra. The seizure is estimated to have a market value of USD 310,000. The MJIB inspectors arrested the owner of the company. Director Hsiao Hsiang-tai of MJIB Kaohsiung County office was reluctant to reveal details of the case, but did note that the suspect, 35 years old, named KO Bao-ji (STC 2688, 0202-0679) is suspected of carrying on the smuggling operation for more than three years. He has smuggled a variety of illicit goods into Taiwan, both by using the trading company as a consignee for shipments containing the contraband, and by mail. The suspect has also personally traveled to China and carried back drugs for sale in his shop. The suspect is believed to be a major wholesaler of illicit drugs and fake Viagra in southern Taiwan.

¶3. Hsiao stated that the county's health unit is examining the drugs to determine if they contain components hazardous to human health. According to Hsiao, the health officials have stated that the counterfeit Viagra seized has different ingredients than those found in the legitimate product. Due to the on-going investigation, investigators would not comment further. AIT/K will follow up as the investigation unfolds.

Thiele

Paal